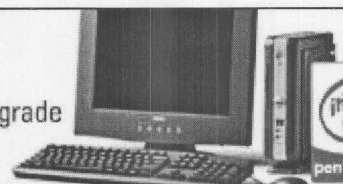


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Better Word Count in Excel

August 5, 2003

By Neil J. Rubenking

A recent tip ("[Counting Words in Excel](#)") presented an Excel macro to count the number of words in a cell. But I found a much easier way to do this using a formula instead of a macro:

=IF(ISBLANK(A1),0,LEN(TRIM(SUBSTITUTE (A1,CHAR(10)," "))-LEN(SUBSTITUTE (SUBSTITUTE(TRIM(A1),CHAR(10),"")," ","")))+1)

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The formula works by taking the length of the text and subtracting the length of that same text minus the spaces between its words. If there is text, it adds one space for the initial word.

William "Ike" Eisenhauer

This particular tip inspired several readers to write in with nonmacro solutions, and Mr. Eisenhauer was the first to reach the goal. The key point in his formula is the difference between the TRIM worksheet function and the Trim function in a macro. The macro function Trim cuts off leading and trailing spaces from the string passed into it, period.

The TRIM worksheet function removes all spaces except for single spaces between words. The formula TRIM (SUBSTITUTE (A1,CHAR(10)," ")) replaces all line-feed characters with spaces and then trims the result to eliminate leading, trailing, and multiple spaces. The length of this formula's result minus the length of the same string with all spaces removed is the number of word-separating spaces in the input text.

This formula-based solution is more convenient than the original macro solution. To count the words in a cell using the macro, you have to select the cell and then invoke the macro from the menu or with a keyboard shortcut. The result is displayed in a message box and is not accessible for use in other formulas. With this formula-based solution, you have the freedom, for example, to count the words in each cell of a row and sum the counts.

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